

RECRUITERS MUST DECLARE WAR

ORLANDO, Fla.—Launching the Employment Management Association's 31st Annual Conference and Exposition on a positive note, educator and talent scout John Sullivan told HR professionals May 3, 2000, that "this is the golden age of recruiting."

Sullivan assured an attentive audience that "it's the best time ever to be in HR. It doesn't get any better than this."

While on sabbatical from his job as head of the human resource program at San Francisco State University, Sullivan is chief talent officer for Agilent Technologies of Santa Clara, Calif. As one might expect from a Californian, he told the crowd that "the hottest stuff is coming out of California, where we're all a little nutso."

He issued a battle call to recruiters: This is war and HR must be more aggressive. "Are you a warrior or are you a peacenik?" Sullivan asked the group. Because the best people aren't looking for jobs, recruiters need to take the initiative and try bolder approaches.

Sullivan, who has been called the "Michael Jordan of hiring" by *Fast Company* magazine, frequently contributes to HRNET, a worldwide Internet information exchange, and writes a weekly column for *Electronic Recruiting Daily*.

He advised the 900 conference attendees to follow the lead of Cisco Systems, whose chief executive officer tells his HR staffers that he expects them to act like a return-on-investment department, and to lead organizational change at Internet speed. Cisco CEO John T. Chambers, according to Sullivan, says that "it's not big firms that will win out over smaller ones; it's faster ones that will win out over slower ones."

If Michael Jordan, for instance, announced that he was looking for a job, said Sullivan, "it would take only one day to hire him." Recruiters must act fast, he warned, but they must hire only the best. The cost of a bad hire, according to Sullivan, is \$300,000 a year.

"How much are you making?" he asked recruiters in the audience. He calculated the value of a good recruiter in the millions of dollars, and said a really good recruiter should get bonuses for hiring top performers.

And then you should continually recruit your top people, once a month, according to Sullivan. Don't let your competitors lure them away, he admonished.

RECRUITING ON THE WEB

In the near future, all recruiting will be web-based, he said. The so-called digital divide is not really a problem, he believes, because almost everyone has access to computers in libraries or through friends or relatives.

"Global poaching" will make it possible to work in California without leaving home. "It's what you do, not where you work." Sullivan himself has no office. He works at home and so does his boss.

Job seekers will be able to log onto the Internet, do an online assessment, have a remote video interview and have employers bidding for their services online.

In this brave new world, recruiters will become consultants and heroes. "Come on," Sullivan urged, "join the gold rush."